

**City of West St. Paul
Open Council Work Session Minutes
January 13, 2020**

1. Roll Call

Mayor Napier called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Dave Napier
Councilmembers Wendy Berry, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
Anthony Fernandez, John Justen, and Dick Vitelli

Absent: Councilmember Bob Pace

Also Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Police Chief Brian Sturgeon
Fire Chief Mark Juelfs
Human Resources Director Debra Gieseke
Finance Director Char Stark
Parks & Public Works Director/City Engineer Ross Beckwith
Asst. Parks & Recreation Director Dave Schletty
Community Development Director Jim Hartshorn
City Clerk Shirley Buecksler

Representative Rick Hansen
Senator Matt Klein
Jason Booth, Sibley Area Hockey Boosters

2. Review and Approve the OCWS Agenda

Council approved the OCWS agenda, as presented.

3. Review the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

Approved.

4. Agenda Item(s)

A. Legislative Update – Meeting with Legislators

Mayor Napier welcomed Representative Hansen and Senator Klein to tonight's meeting.

Schroeder said we wanted to hear any comments Representative Hansen and Senator Klein have about our bonding request, sanitary sewer force mains, and critical infrastructure prior to the legislative session.

Representative Hansen said he has spent much of the last week trying to get lift station to the Governor's bonding proposal. He said we have a history here of accumulating a large amount of debt, which we do not want. He met with Erin Murphy and we had it in the house bill. It's very likely it will be in the House bill again, but it would be much better to be in the Governor's bill. There needs to be changes and said it's important to have the new Met Council rep attend these meetings and see the issues and get a one on one with West St. Paul and Council representatives. The Governor's proposal will be out by the 15th of January. Senator Klein said he wrote a letter and had the same difficulties.

Senator Klein said there is an on-going metro Senate bonding tour, and we are trying to get on that tour. The response has been that they came to West St. Paul a couple years ago, but they didn't give us any money. The request is reasonable enough and he is optimistic that this will be a top priority for the bonding session.

Representative Hansen said there will be local projects but we will have to work at it.

Councilmember Vitelli asked Representative Hansen about what will be in the Governor's proposal, if the Governor said there will be no local projects included. Representative Hansen agreed and said there will be \$200M to the Public Facilities Authority (PFA).

Schroeder added that what the PFA told him today is that they would most likely not do a grant, so it would be a loan. Their last issuance on Friday was 1.25 but our last one was 1.9. To go through that process is hardly worth it.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said last we discussed this when you toured, City Engineer Beckwith has been nervous waiting for this session. She asked Representative Hansen if he is thinking that this grant won't work and what the likelihood of individual projects would be. Representative Hansen said it's not that it's not that good, just we have a bump in the road here. The legislature will write the bill and it will be in the House bill. That's his number one priority, he said. Senator Klein said it is his number one priority, as well.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if we should go out for bid but Representative Hansen said no. For purposes of this conversation, Schroeder said whatever you spend or commit to in advance is not eligible.

Schroeder said if a road fails, that's one thing. But if a lift station fails, that's a whole different matter.

Representative Hansen said we will know for sure by May 19 and wouldn't give up hope.

Councilmember Berry questioned if it was asked during the tour if we qualify for the PFA. Representative Hansen said yes, that was the House.

If you look who has received the funding, Schroeder said there are metro area communities that have received loans. The Met Council and Minneapolis, possibly St. Paul as well, have received some sort of funding. He doesn't think there has been a metro grant.

Councilmember Justen asked if there are things we can do to help these efforts. Senator Klein said any influence you have with any bonding committee members. He said he will think about this.

Representative Hansen said the state is running into difficulty with Emerald Ash Borer and disposing of trees that have been infected. He thinks this is the week they are doing a tour of District Energy and Pigs Eye. There is a pile of ash trees that are being stored. The City of Rochester got a permit to open burn a large pile of ash trees. We're dealing with the cost factor here. We got the grant to take down trees but now we're getting to this point that there is so much tree residue. As they start to spread and take down trees, we're being asked to subsidize District Energy so that they are disposing of the trees. If you landfill them, they're starting to pile up. The City of St. Paul contract with Xcel Energy ends in a couple years. If that shuts down, we have nowhere to dispose of them. It becomes more of a disposal option. Because of our proximity to St. Paul, this is essentially a seven metro county area problem. Just wanted to put this on your agenda that there is work being done there. If I have an idea of your costs and volume, it would be helpful for me to build the case, he said.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said part of the problem is that combined power is no longer considered renewable. No longer incentives for Xcel Energy to work with District Energy. The classification of what's renewable or environmentally friendly, we know this needs to be done, she said.

Representative Hansen said this first step is to get members of the administration out to see the visual – the piles are starting to grow. The classification may be part of that particular issue. Part of the issue is wind and solar have become cheaper, so it may not be strictly on the economic side of it.

Mayor Napier asked Schletty, with our management plan we have in place, how many ash trees we took down last year. Schletty said probably 50 trees and that we've been disposing in South St. Paul at no cost to us so far. Mayor Napier said it could be an issues for us in the future. Senator Klein asked if 50 was the peak. Schletty said that's the most so far in a year.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if District Energy is no longer burning wood. Representative Hansen said they're burning. There was an article and you can tell because there's a plume from water condensation but there's more than they can burn.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said Xcel Energy isn't required to sign on with them for the power aspect. They won't be required to buy the energy anymore.

Councilmember Vitelli said he didn't think they were generating electricity. Councilmember Eng-Sarne said it is a byproduct of heat production. Mayor Napier said we will keep our eye on that.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said something that was brought up at the climate meeting was new ideas on what to do with the wood, such as barriers along the highway. She questioned if using this wood is further spreading the disease.

Representative Hansen said he didn't know that sound barriers were made from trees affected by Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's.

Mayor Napier thanked Representative Hansen and Senator Klein for coming and for fighting for West St. Paul. He said we need to get some of these lift stations replaced, so they will probably see us down there a few times. Mayor Napier asked them to keep Schroeder informed and let us know what we can do.

Senator Klein thanked Mayor Napier for having them. He understands Councilmember Vitelli's concern and we don't want to wait on this to see what the Senate does. He said we will see what we can do to get some progress and let you know.

B. Ice Arena Expansion / Joint Powers Agreements

On November 12, 2019, Staff introduced a proposal of expanding the ice arena to Council, which had been requested by two of the major customers of the facility. At that meeting, preliminary cost estimates of \$1.6 million for high school locker rooms and dry floor training facility space were discussed.

Five members of Council were present at the November 12 OCWS. At this meeting, consensus from members in attendance was to continue to the next step of officially contacting our prospective project partners of Mendota Heights and School District 197 (ISD197). We have not yet taken that step, as we have refined possible project schedules and funding requirements. At this time, our intent is to provide the most recent update on those matters.

In 2014, West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, and ISD197 entered a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to address maintenance needs of the arena facility. While the agreement contemplated expenditures of \$1,865,999, and each partner contributing \$555,333, total costs have grown. After completion of dehumidification in 2020, it is anticipated that the arena will have received \$2,101,275 in capital investment since 2015. West St. Paul will have covered \$790,609 of those costs upon completion of the 2020 improvements (or \$235,276 above the original cost share).

Since the November OCWS, we have looked at potential project schedules. Council was provided in the OCWS packet an exhibit that denotes the most aggressive of identified schedules that could result in a construction project as early as spring, 2021.

This schedule assumes funding commitments from Mendota Heights, SD197, West St. Paul, Sibley Area Youth Hockey Association, the Sibley Hockey Boosters, and MAP South Hockey along with a level of fundraising success. It is also assumed that, in conformance with Council policy, the project approach would include avoidance of debt issuance. This approach suggests that funding partner participation would be fulfilled within the 2020-2022 timeframe.

A refined project estimate suggests a project development cost of \$2,330,000 to construct the shell space. Tenant Improvements (TI's) and furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) would be in addition to this project cost. It has been discussed that the major tenants of the individual spaces would address these TI/FFE costs.

Within project costs is included reconstruction of the parking lot. A portion of the lot will be deconstructed as part of the facility expansion. It is also anticipated that the lot will be reconfigured to maximize parking and to comply with current development requirements (drainage, access, lighting, landscaping).

The total project budget includes the base project of dry floor and locker room space, plus an alternate to expand arena storage space. The process also includes a suggestion that a task force be created to afford representatives of funding partners' active participation opportunities into the final project design.

Schroeder said we have tweaked the numbers a bit. Last time we talked, it was about \$1.6M but, all in, he thinks we are talking about a \$2.3M project plus TI's and FFE, which isn't intended to be included in that number. The conversation up until now is that we would be responsible for the shell construction and other folks for the TI's and the FFE. In looking at the numbers, the \$2.3M would include the shell and the parking lot and those numbers are sort of inflated to a 2021 construction schedule. He said that he thinks 2021 is aggressive, depending on folks coming to the table with a commitment. The easy math would be that we would be asking the West St. Paul Council and taxpayers to be funding \$700,000-750,000 and same from Mendota Heights and ISD197. That seemed like a big number. If you recall when we entered into the 2014 agreement with Mendota Heights and ISD197, each party was committing to \$555,000 for maintenance. That maintenance occurred from 2015 and is finishing up this year. Their commitment cap was at \$555,000 and change. We got a Mighty Ducks grant of \$200,000. The City of West St. Paul funding current estimate is \$790,000. In front of you is a schedule. The important piece of that is now going to each of those funding partners and trying to find out what their level of commitment could be. That \$700,000-750,000 again seems like a big number. In the material in your packet, Schroeder said he assumed a lesser contribution from each of those and a greater contribution from fundraising, grants and customers. He said Staff is looking for input from Council on what is reasonable and what is not. The big assumption he said that he is coming to the table with is that we approach it from a pay as you go system. If money comes in sufficiently to kick start it, we do it. If not, it creates a delay. The alternative is bonding, but we're trying to figure out a way to do it without bonding, he said.

Mayor Napier said he believes there is \$67,000 in a fund for a future project.

Jason Booth said that he assumed the role of President of Sibley Area Hockey Boosters last year. They are looking for support in meeting the needs of all ages of hockey players in our area. We've done a good job to facilitate that financially. For years, the community has talked about having the high school locker rooms at the facility, along with other amenities to help our program be better. One of those is a dry land facility. South St. Paul has done a great job with theirs. It offers the opportunity for our athletes to improve their game and would put the West St. Paul Arena at a level that it should be. MAP South is a tenant there and has a lot of pressure with no one on their ice in South St. Paul. Casey Weimer is not here tonight but is on the Board of Directors for the Sibley Youth Hockey Association. He and I have been combining efforts to drive this effort forward to fruition, and we are moving forward, he said. The fact that we are here having this conversation and meeting with Mendota Heights and ISD197 is very positive. Right now, we have between \$50,000-60,000 to put towards this project. We were looking at it from a private sector side and put together what we thought was a project based on what Casey Weimer created at the St. Thomas Arena. We pursued the numbers and thought we came to the table with a pretty good sense of it but Mr. Booth said he was surprised at the dollar figures we are talking about now, compared to what they came up with, and the timeframe. They built the facility at St. Thomas in five months, but this is completely different. He said he is a champion in partnering to speak to these groups and thinks that's a great next step for them. There are partners who are vested in us being successful with this and he thinks it's reasonable to move forward. These are very tangible improvements, based on the number of children participating in youth hockey associations from other communities. From a booster standpoint, we are 100% behind trying to get this done.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if they're looking to pay off the \$750,000 from ISD197 and the City in one year. He asked if it would be more appealing to bond for it and have them make an annual contribution for 15 years.

Schroeder said Council policy is that we're not going to issue any more debt except sanitary sewer. On the schedule he put forward, part of it projects when we would need construction draws and in what amount. What that suggests is, over the next 1 ½ to 2 years, we need to get \$2.3M from whomever, some portion of which is from the City. Mayor Napier mentioned the \$67,000 and Schroeder said he is assuming that if we do go down a path, those funds are sitting there for architectural. That's sort of already in the bank, he said. We could go that far, even if we never get any further. Part of the funding commitments, it would be his expectation or recommendation that we would be going to Mendota Heights and ISD197 and saying, over the next two years (2021, 2022), we need your share. Last time it was a three year ask and ISD197 basically paid and Mendota Heights requested five years.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if there is any other mechanism other than bonding. Schroeder said cash. As financing goes, Councilmember Vitelli asked if ISD197 would be able to legally bond for it. City Attorney Land said school districts have

their own bonding authority. She said she would assume it's for a facility, even if not attached to their building.

Councilmember Vitelli said, perhaps, they could make a commitment for 15 years. Schroeder said he knows very little about school district funding issues but that it is a reasonable question.

Mr. Booth said, in a non-profit world, an organization can accept a gift and have it be used over time and, ultimately, the remainder would go back to the grantor. He asked if there is an opportunity for someone to give them a million dollars to do a project like this. City Attorney Land said, absolutely. Mr. Booth said there might be ways for that kind of thing to happen. For services, he asked if an architectural firm can donate services to the City. City Attorney Land said yes, the City will take donations in any form.

Schroeder said there are a couple of things on that. The information in front of Council, he has assumed in that public process but cannot assume it's actually going to occur. This is structured as a straight up public process, he said.

Mr. Booth said it could ultimately be a long term lease to get the project done. Schroeder agreed. Mr. Booth asked if that allows it to be a private process. Schroeder said no. Mr. Booth asked if the property is leased and improvements are made on the lease, if they can do that as a private entity versus the City as a public entity. City Attorney Land said it feels awkward and will need to be researched. Schroeder said if the shell is there and, through the lease, you're doing the TI's and FFE, that's easy. But to build the shell is more difficult. City Attorney Land said we would have to look at it.

Councilmember Justen said if the \$67,000 is currently in a fund within West St. Paul, that's our money and it looks like that would be eaten by the architectural before we get to the other entities. Schroeder said he was only reflecting on the fact that if you wanted to fund an architectural contract, that money is sitting there to do that. Councilmember Justen said the importance is if the \$750,000 would have the \$67,000 sliced off the top of it, or if it would be dispersed between the other entities.

Schroeder said the appropriate things are either we got a gift and we are going to use it for our share or we would recognize from where the gift came. And the grantor has expenses in order to assist us and we would recognize it as a contribution towards their expenses.

Mayor Napier asked what Staff needs, other than talking to the other partners. Schroeder said we just need to know your comfort level with the numbers. Either \$750,000 or a lower number including gifts and grants.

Councilmember Vitelli commented that MR. Booth is good at the gifts and grants and asked if he has shared any of those possibilities with Staff. Mr. Booth said we had a conversation about it. There was a very well done feasibility study about 5 years ago and that there was an appetite for about \$600,000-700,000 to raise out in the community. As an organization, we are comfortable with committing to \$50,000 a year. About half of that comes from the Sibley Area charitable gambling funds. They may be able to come up with more. The feasibility study didn't ask about half the people we know are very solid, he said.

Councilmember Justen asked Schroeder if he is asking Council to say we are comfortable with an even split or if we are willing to commit more. Right now, Schroeder said we are looking at this as a \$2.3M project. Splitting it three ways gets us to that \$750,000 number. If you're comfortable taking the next step with an ask of the other two partners, knowing we have the same amount, we will do that. If you feel it's not realistic, he said he needs some other direction.

Mayor Napier said he thinks we should reduce the ask to a realistic number and put the pressure on the groups to raise additional funds, divide it into quarters, and the pressure is on fundraising for a quarter of it.

Schroeder said the paperwork suggested \$550,000 for each partner. Councilmember Justen asked what happens if the fundraising doesn't hit that line. Schroeder said it delays the project.

In a capital campaign, Mr. Booth said you'll have to hit thresholds before you ever hit a shovel in the ground. We will have to be aggressive to meet a number like that but, between our gambling and interested folks, we should be able to, he said.

Mr. Booth said Sibley Area Youth Hockey Association should be noted, not MAP South. Councilmember Vitelli asked if he would like that changed for public purposes; Mr. Booth said yes.

Mayor Napier asked if everyone is on board for the \$580,000 ask.

Councilmember Berry asked if we have \$580,000. Schroeder said no, this would be 2021 and 2022, so we would suggest a levy to get that in those two years.

Mayor Napier said, ultimately, we own the facility and can capitalize on the lease and rental, which would make it more appealing with the addition.

Councilmember Justen asked if we have a proposed number for the lease. Mr. Booth said you have all the current information on what the high school, youth association and MAP South buys for arena hours. It's very reasonable for ISD197 to be paying for locker use. If the Boosters help them do that or not, it should be 100% reasonable to have solid facilities there.

Schroeder said that will be part of future conversations.

Councilmember Justen said he would breathe easier to have those numbers and would like to see the potential investment on return.

Schroeder said we are expecting that things like that will be addressed in the next three to four months.

Councilmember Berry said Mendota Heights could say no. Schroeder said we are done if that happens.

Mayor Napier thanked Mr. Booth for coming and said it is exciting to have something like this moving and that hopefully we can help them out.

Mr. Booth added that they are playing a home game against Hastings on Thursday night.

C. 1010 Dodd Community Arboretum

At the October 28, 2019 OCWS, the City Council discussed options for the vacant lot at 1010 Dodd. The topic was forwarded to the Environmental Committee for further discussion, brainstorming and recommendations. A subcommittee was formed and the Committee has had discussions on this topic at its last three meetings. A proposal has been developed and the Committee feels this is the best use for the property at this time. The proposal includes multiple raised bed pollinator gardens, the largest being a uniquely shaped Mandala garden. By definition, a mandala is “a geometric shape or pattern that symbolizes the universe; a meditation tool for creating sacred space, relaxation and focusing the mind; or a symbol used as a gateway to a spiritual journey.” Mandalas are usually a circle that contain starburst, floral, wheel or spiral patterns within it. A mandala garden is simply a garden space with plants that take on this design principle. There would also be trees planted on the southern border of the property to act as a buffer with the residential properties. There would be a path or sidewalk that will dissect the property, along with picnic tables and benches to promote a community gathering space. Finally, there would be additional pollinator raised bed gardens and a welcome sign on the northeast corner. The idea would be to engage community and volunteer groups to plant and maintain sections of gardens.

If Council likes the proposal, the next steps would be to finalize plans through community engagement, create a budget, and develop a plan to gather interest and donations to fund the project. This project, with all mentioned elements, is estimated to cost about \$23,000. Staff hopes that a majority of that could be raised through cash donations, as well as donations of time and materials.

Councilmember Vitelli said we talked about this in great length but that now he’s thinking if a public parking lot would be beneficial to that area, with a restaurant

nearby. There is a limited amount of parking in that area, which limits future development there. A place for people to park their car and walk.

The area right now, Councilmember Fernandez said, is over-parked if you take into consideration the Paster property center. A parking lot on that space would only be about 13 cars. He questioned if it would be permitted parking for stores on Smith. When the FoodSmith item came through the Planning Commission, they had to find a place to park. It was be awkward to logistically maintain, he said.

Schroeder reminded Council that the land is going to become part of the roadway infrastructure so anything that goes there is going to be temporary.

Councilmember Fernandez said the vision was also to shrink that area down. There is such vacancy that you want to pull things down. You want to have activity that's conducive to people walking so that it provides more of a feel to it. Right now, it feels barren or open. This would bring it in with more activity, and it's a way to get other businesses around there to pitch in and have a placard. He said he thinks it looks cool.

Councilmember Justen said on the parking and limited number of spaces, it's not enough of a contribution to do, in his opinion. It's only \$23,000, he said, and there is hope for cash donations; however, he feels this is a bit of an overshoot for something that's going to go away. The Environmental Committee knows more of this than him, he said. Pollinators are generally hardy and successful. He said he would like to see this, it's really great work, but feels like there is a little bit more ambition here for a temporary solution. He wants to get it done but, when you look at the plans, he said it's something that looks more permanent and it's more difficult to explain why you need to take it away later. The message has to be that this is temporary. To him, when he looks at this, he said it looks wonderful but would like it somewhere that it will be for a long time, not just two to three years. Every project contributes to what we're dealing with, he said, and would like to see something done there but less expansive.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said when we first talked about this project, this body was looking at 15 years, which was the message passed along to the Environmental Committee. Also something to consider, she said, is across the street are two underutilized spaces. Little Dodd Park that we are not putting ice on anymore and a small playground next to that. Potentially, we could pick this up and move it across the street when the time comes. Or we could build this across the street and build the parking lot in the middle. However, that seems even more permanent, she said.

Councilmember Berry said it's really nice but that she is having a hard time seeing it in a small space. At Orme Park, there is a big field where it would look nice. Or Kennedy has some open space. This is really cool, she said, but that she is having trouble putting it in the spot it's designed for.

Mayor Napier stated that this is the coolest thing he has ever seen. With the work that went into it, he said we need to get this in our city. If it cannot be done there, then we

need to find a place. The Thompson Oaks Golf Course, perhaps. This is awesome and it needs to happen, he said.

Councilmember Vitelli suggested the corner of Oakdale and Butler Avenues. Mayor Napier said, after 40 years working at Dodge Nature Center, he would worry about vandalism in an unfenced area.

Councilmember Justen asked if 15 years is an actual expectation. Schroeder said the back story is that the state just put money in that intersection, so it could be dozed anytime soon.

Mayor Napier said we would need to be approached by a developer with a vision and some money to come in and present something. It could happen in 5, 10 or 15 years, he said. We want to be ready when a developer comes in so it's staged for someone to come forward.

Councilmember Justen said a lot of his objections would go away if it's 15 years. But we don't know that it's not 2 years.

Councilmember Fernandez said he feels this is the place for this because of the things he stated before about the site and the way it looks. We could do similar ones, as well, but this spot is blighted. A small investment of \$23,000 could go exponentially. WE have people in the city, a garden center, City Staff, several stores such as Menards, Lowes and others with plants and resources. All we need to do is ask.

Schroeder said some portion of this, regardless of when for roadway improvements, for sidewalk and fence is not going anywhere. That portion of the project costs, the biggest piece was the sidewalk itself. Even when something happens, it is designed so that would stay. Some portion of the \$23,000 would remain. Second, regardless of redevelopment, you need MnDOT approvals to make road improvements. That's all a process, so right now we are starting the process for funding 2024 projects. A year from now, it will be 2025 projects. All of that takes a lot of time, he said.

Councilmember Vitelli said part of his concern is with the raised beds and asked if it will look like this Minnesota Landscape Arboretum or if it will become overgrown. He asked who will attend to it.

Schletty said the idea was to section off into seven sections and have community groups adopt each section, to plant and maintain. Volunteer groups would take care of it. Public Works may need to water from time to time.

Councilmember Fernandez said, from what he's seen in other communities, the City will have it on their checklist, cut grass and take care of things that pop out. But once other entities get involved, he said it self sustains. When there's something nice, typically vandalism doesn't happen because of the mentality of it.

Councilmember Berry stated that Jade Pennig is here tonight from the Environmental Committee.

Ms. Pennig said she wanted to comment on the logistics but it was the Environmental Committee's intention to have the raised beds portable in 10 to 15 years. In theory, there would be effort involved, but it could be taken apart and moved to another location.

Councilmember Vitelli asked what it's made of. Ms. Pennig said they're made of wood. We need to figure out the height, depending on the size that gets approved.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if the Committee put any costs on that. Schletty said Ms. Pennig developed it with square footage of everything, so Staff could estimate costs.

Councilmember Justen asked where the sidewalk connections are and if they go to the cross trail. Schletty said yes. Councilmember Justen asked if it is a nightmare to cross at the tip. Schletty said the cross to Doddway is short and the cross to the north is longer.

Councilmember Justen said he wouldn't want to limit pedestrian and bike crossings.

Regarding sidewalks, Councilmember Eng-Sarne said if you drive by right now, that sidewalk on the plan doesn't exist. If you walk it, there is a footpath that is in the snow right now that actually matches the drawing. Essentially, in your mind, you could shave about \$8,000 off the park aspect of it. If you like it, we could design for other underutilized parks in the city, which could work towards and branding aspect and replicate it.

Councilmember Justen said this is a launching point to have in every ward with minimal funding from the City. He said he loves this design and would like to see it in more places, especially if it is portable.

Councilmember Berry said if we build something like this, we want people to see it, so she would pause on any fencing around it. She said she would like to keep it open like this.

Ms. Pennig said if we are interested in potentially moving to another park, it would be great to identify the space if we need to adjust the dimension. A secondary benefit is that it's pretty. The main focus was how do we fill up this space so it's maintainable so that no part of the garden bed is not easily accessible for maintenance. A mandala garden makes sure that you can get around.

Councilmember Vitelli asked Ms. Pennig if she was envisioning that the panels are green treat. 15 years from now they won't be easy to move if green treat. Schletty said we were thinking 2 x 8 treated lumber (cedar).

Councilmember Justen said if we want it to be visual from the street, higher is better if we can make it work. A 3 feet height is more noticeable than 8 inches.

Schroeder said if the consensus is that you're reasonably comfortable with the design, we will create some sort of work plan.

Mayor Napier said he doesn't want any Council down the road to shame us for putting in a temporary garden. He said he is ready to let the Environmental Committee go forward.

Councilmember Vitelli thinks the structure will be more expensive to build.

Councilmember Fernandez said the design is conceptual. Ms. Pennig said the design could be altered and that the Committee decided to shoot for what they wanted and can pull back, if needed.

Councilmember Vitelli said the Committee could seek out bids for it.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne thanked Jade Pennig, Rebecca McCarty and the subcommittee who worked on this.

Schroeder said we will put together a marketing communication plan for fundraising. Mayor Napier said they will need to know it could be removed someday.

Councilmember Fernandez asked if the fence is the homeowner's. Schroeder said yes.

Councilmember Fernandez said it also happens to be the site of the most horrific event in the city and that he's sure the group would love to see something there, some activity. Especially if they go there every year. He said we went through this a year or so ago. \$23,000 is very doable.

Councilmember Berry added that Boy Scout groups need Eagle Scout projects to do. Councilmember Fernandez agreed and said we just need to seek it out and ask. There are many groups that can be contacted, he said.

D. Contract Extension with YMCA to Operate the West St. Paul Pool in 2020

The City has an existing contract with the YMCA, which was approved in 2013. The three year contract has a clause to automatically renew for additional one-year terms, up to five years under the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement, unless either party gives written notice of its intent to renegotiate or not to renew to the other party. 2020 is the final year the current contract can be renewed. Schletty said that Staff has met with the YMCA, and both parties wish to continue operating under the current contract agreement. They also agreed to begin working on a new agreement during the summer of 2020. The summer of 2019 was a bad weather season, and it reflected on the attendance at the pool, where final numbers were the worst in last

three years. We are hopeful that numbers will increase in 2020 with better weather, additional promotion, and with the closing of the YMCA's West St Paul facility and pools. Schletty said Staff recommends the City Council approve the contract extension with the YMCA to continue operating the WSP Pool for the 2020 season.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne asked if we can keep it open until 9:00 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. Schletty said we can talk with the YMCA. We can negotiate the hours with what works for them. Councilmember Eng-Sarne said, generally, YMCA pools stay open until 9:00 p.m. Sometimes people get home but there isn't enough time to take advantage of paying for it. Schletty said it's possible that we could modify hours on certain days. They also do rentals on the weekends for parties, he said.

Councilmember Justen said this would also be an opportunity to discuss the differential between West St. Paul residents and YMCA members. As a resident of West St. Paul and not a YMCA member, they have to pay more than someone who is a YMCA member. He would like to see a flat fee, he said.

Schletty said he talked about that when they met but that it's kind of outside of the contract itself but we are working on how we can make that better.

Mayor Napier said it reads that YMCA members get a reduced rate, established by the City. With the loss of their big facility in West St. Paul, he would imagine their membership is down. He said he is curious how they see that working this year. If they have less members, perhaps we can work out a deal with what West St. Paul residents are charged. He said we should talk about it.

Councilmember Vitelli said we may have increased use without the YMCA here. In the last few years, Schletty said only a handful of members took advantage of it.

Mayor Napier said there has been a lot of talk about it and it's important that we are looking out for our taxpayers.

Councilmember Justen asked if the reduced rate is also on the daily rate. Schletty said it is only on the pass.

Schletty said some groups may come in to use the pool but it's the same as students from Moreland, who pay a reduced rate. Any group can get that rate, which may be part of the confusion.

Mayor Napier thanked Schletty for coming to discuss this with Council.

5. Adjourn

Motion was made by Councilmember Justen and seconded by Councilmember Eng-Sarne to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

David J. Napier
Mayor
City of West St. Paul